(b) if so, the details thereof and the issues objected to by India; and

(c) by when a decision in the matter is likely to be taken by the WTO?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI): (a) to (c) No, Sir. However, Brazil has sought consultations with the USA regarding subsidies being given by it to upland cotton. In accordance with the provisions of the Understanding on Rules and Procedures Governing the Settlement of Disputes (DSU) of the World Trade Organization (WTO), India has notified the consulting countries of its desire to be joined in the consultations as a third party. Further action will be taken in accordance with the provisions of the DSU.

Besides, in the context of the ongoing negotiations in agriculture under the Doha Work Programme of the WTO, India has proposed substantial reductions in all trade-distorting domestic support and the elimination of export subsidies by developed countries. The negotiations are scheduled to conclude by Ist January, 2005.

Differences between India and EU on trade issues

†1202. SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN':
SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a controversial situation has arisen between India and European countries on some issues relating to trade;

(b) if so, the details of the issues and the views of India and European countries on these issues; and

(c) the steps taken to eliminate the controversies on these issues?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI): (a) and (b) There are several India-EU bilateral trade issues pertaining to market access for Indian products in agricultural, industrial, (including textile/clothing products) and services sector. These include non-tariff barriers in form of stringent regulations and non-harmonised procedures, complex tariff/quota regulations, repeated and disproportionate use of trade defence instruments against India's export to EU, impact of zero-duty concession extended by EU to Pakistan, European Commission's proposal to impose 100% control measures against India's seafood exports to EU.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) These market access issues are highlighted in appropriate bilateral forums like India-EU Joint Commission, meetings of Sub Commissions and also in the bilateral sectoral working group meetings. During the recently concluded India-Eu Business Summit held in Copenhagen in October, 2002, EU has been requested to take an overall view on bilateral trade matters keeping the long-term perspective.

Import of sensitive items

1203. SHRI MOOLCHAND MEENA:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the import of 300 sensitive items being monitored by his Ministry declined by 3.72 per cent in April, 2002 to Rs. 688 crore as against Rs. 714 crore in the corresponding month last year;

(b) if so, the main reasons for the same; and

(c) the steps proposed in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Decline had been mainly due to decrease in the imports of fruits and vegetables, edible oil and cotton and silk products. Imports of all items, including the import of the 300 sensitive items, are subject to market forces within the parameters of the Exim Policy. A marginal decline in the imports of the 300 sensitive items does not call for any intervention by the Government.

Trade gap

1204. SHRI MOOLCHAND MEENA:
SHRI SURESH PACHOURI:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the value of exports and imports during the first half of the current financial year and the trade gap;

(b) the details of comparison with the same period of 1999-2000 and 2000-2001; and

(c) the measures taken by Government to reduce the trade gap?